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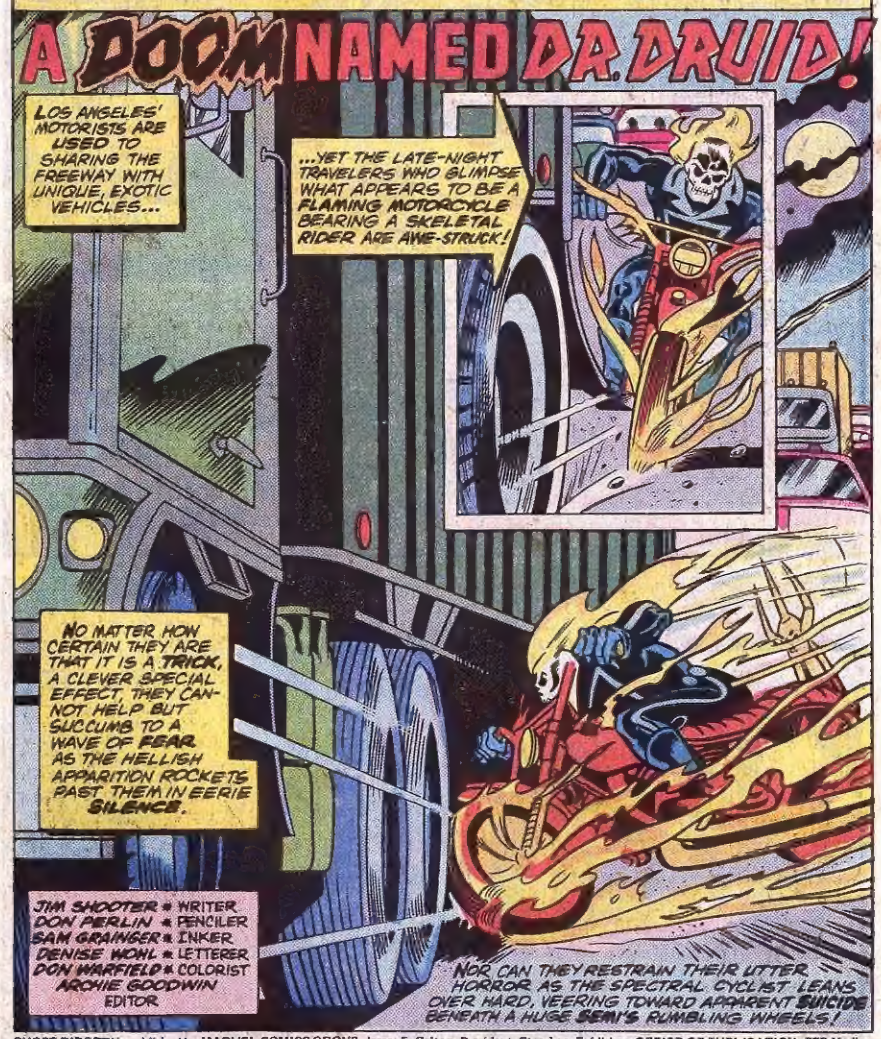
Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE GHOST RIDER! ™

A DOOM NAMED DR. DRUID!


LOS ANGELES' MOTORISTS ARE USED TO SHARING THE FREEWAY WITH UNIQUE, EXOTIC VEHICLES...
...YET THE LATE-NIGHT TRAVELERS WHO GLIMPSE WHAT APPEARS TO BE A FLAMING MOTORCYCLE BEARING A SKELETAL RIDER ARE AWE-STRUCK!
NO MATTER HOW CERTAIN THEY ARE THAT IT IS A TRICK, A CLEVER SPECIAL EFFECT, THEY CANNOT HELP BUT SUCCUMB TO A WAVE OF FEAR AS THE HELLISH APPARITION ROCKETS PAST THEM IN EERIE SILENCE.
JIM SHOOTER * WRITER
DON PERLIN * PENCILER
SAM GRAINGER * INKER
DENISE MOHL * LETTERER
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ARCHIE GOODWIN EDITOR
NOR CAN THEY RESTRAIN THEIR UTTER HORROR AS THE SPECTRAL CYCLIST LEANS OVER HARD, VEERING TOWARD APPARENT SUICIDE BENEATH A HUGE SEMI'S RUMBLING WHEELS!

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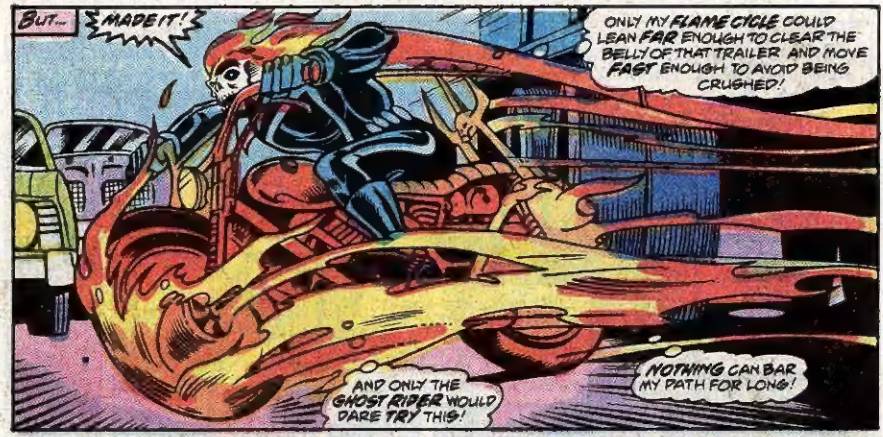
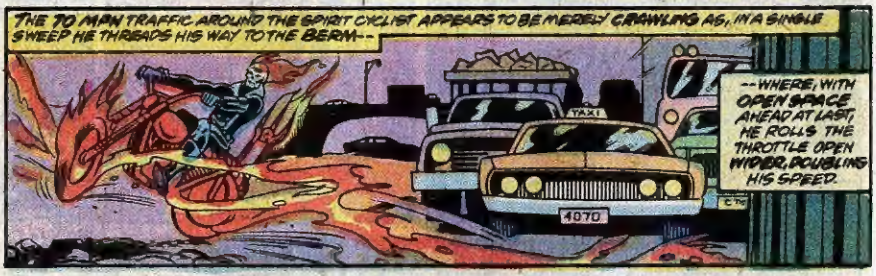
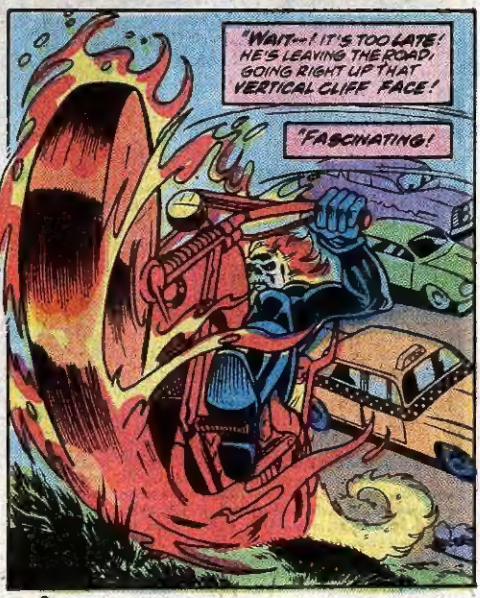

BUT...
MADE IT!
ONLY MY FLAME CYCLE COULD LEAN FAR ENOUGH TO CLEAR THE BELLY OF THAT TRAILER AND MOVE FAST ENOUGH TO AVOID BEING CRUSHED!
AND ONLY THE GHOST RIDER WOULD DARE TRY THIS!
NOTHING CAN BAR MY PATH FOR LONG!


THE TO MAN TRAFFIC AROUND THE SPIRIT CYCLIST APPEARS TO BE MERELY CRAWLING AS, IN A SINGLE SWEEP HE THREADS HIS WAY TO THE BERM--
--WHERE, WITH OPEN SPACE AHEAD AT LAST, HE ROLLS THE THROTTLE OPEN WIDER, DOUBLING HIS SPEED.
TAXI
4070

THUS, THE GHOST RIDER BECOMES JUST A BLAZING BLUR TO THE MORTAL WAYFARERS ALONG THE FREEWAY--
--ONLY ONE OF WHOM DESIRES A BETTER LOOK...
WHAT? DRIVER--! CAN'T YOU GO ANY FASTER?



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UTTERLY... FASCINATING!
THAT'S 'CAUSE YER A TOURIST, MAC! FOLKS AROUND HERE ARE SCARED TO DEATH OF THAT CYCLE-SPOOK!
HEY, WE'RE IN TOWN, NOW! WHERE TO?
ANY HOTEL... NEAR DELAZNY STUDIOS!
MEANWHILE, IN A RESIDENTIAL SECTION, MILES AWAY...
IT'S ONE OF THESE HOUSES...
...THERE! THAT ONE!
THIS IS THE HOME OF ROGER CROSS! THAT'S HIS VOLKSWAGEN PARKED IN THE DRIVEWAY--
--AND BESIDE IT... ROXANNE'S CYCLE!
SHE IS HERE... WITH HIM!
YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS, ROGER CROSS!
WAIT! THE WINDOW--!
--WAS JUST WONDERFUL, ROGER! HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS MY FAVORITE SONG?
I HEARD YOU SINGING IT THE OTHER DAY ROXIE, SO I HAD TO LEARN--?MMM!
YOU'RE SO SWEET, ROGER!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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SHE-- SHE LOVES HIM! HE'S TAKEN HER AWAY FROM ME!
I'LL--I'LL SEAR HIS SOUL FOR THIS! I'LL BURN HIS HOME TO ASHES!
THIS NIGHT HE'LL FEEL MY FINGERS ON HIS THROAT!
BUT, ABRUPTLY...
NO! GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! GOT TO GET AWAY!
AN EARTHLY MOTORCYCLE WOULD BETRAY HIM NOW, STARTING WITH A ROAR--
--BUT THE GHOST RIDER'S MACABRE MACHINE DEPARTS WITH ONLY A WHISPERING HISS OF FLAME.
HE RIDES LIKE A TORTURED SOUL FLEEING THE PIT ITSELF.
AT LENGTH, HE VEERS OFF THE ROAD INTO A WOODED SECTION--
--WEAVING CRAZILY, AT RECKLESS SPEED, THROUGH THE TREES AND BOULDERS, UNTIL...
UHH!
RRRAK!

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THE IMPACT DISINTEGRATES THE FLAME CYCLE, REDUCING IT TO A SEARING BURST OF THE HELLFIRE FROM WHICH IT WAS FORMED.
THE SPIRIT CYCLIST LANDS HARD--
--AND EXPLODES IN RAGE
ARRHH! WHY?!
WHY?!
BREK!
WHY DID I LET HER SLIP AWAY FROM ME? WHY DID I LET HIM TAKE HER?
I WANTED TO KILL HIM FOR IT, BACK THERE! I WANTED TO TEAR HIS HEART OUT--
--BUT HIS BLOOD ON MY HANDS WOULD ONLY MAKE HER HATE ME!
HOW CAN THE GHOST RIDER EXACT VENGEANCE... WHEN IT IS JOHNNY BLAZE WHO IS TRULY TO BLAME?
I... JOHNNY BLAZE!
THE NEXT MORNING IN THE EXECUTIVE OFFICES OF DELAINY STUDIOS...
MR. DELAZNY! THERE'S A MAN WAITING IN YOUR OFFICE TO SEE YOU!
WITHOUT AN APPOINTMENT? AND YOU LET HIM IN?
I-I TRIED TO TELL HIM TO LEAVE! IT WAS... STRANGE! I... COULDN'T!
WELL, I CAN
LISTEN, MISTER, WHOEVER YOU ARE-- WE HAVE A SECURITY FORCE HERE TO DEAL WITH UNINVITED GUESTS!
CHARLES DELAZNY--
--I AM ANTHONY DRUID! DOCTOR DRUID! IT IS MY MISSION TO INVESTIGATE OCCULT PHENOMENA!
I AM HERE TO ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT AN EMPLOYEE OF YOURS--
--THE GHOST RIDER!

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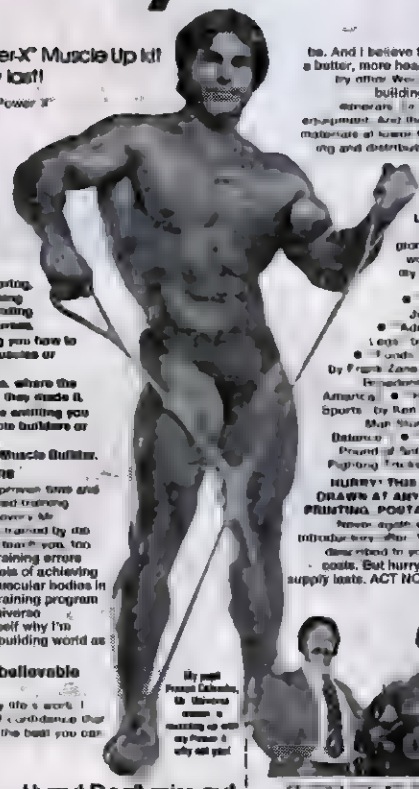

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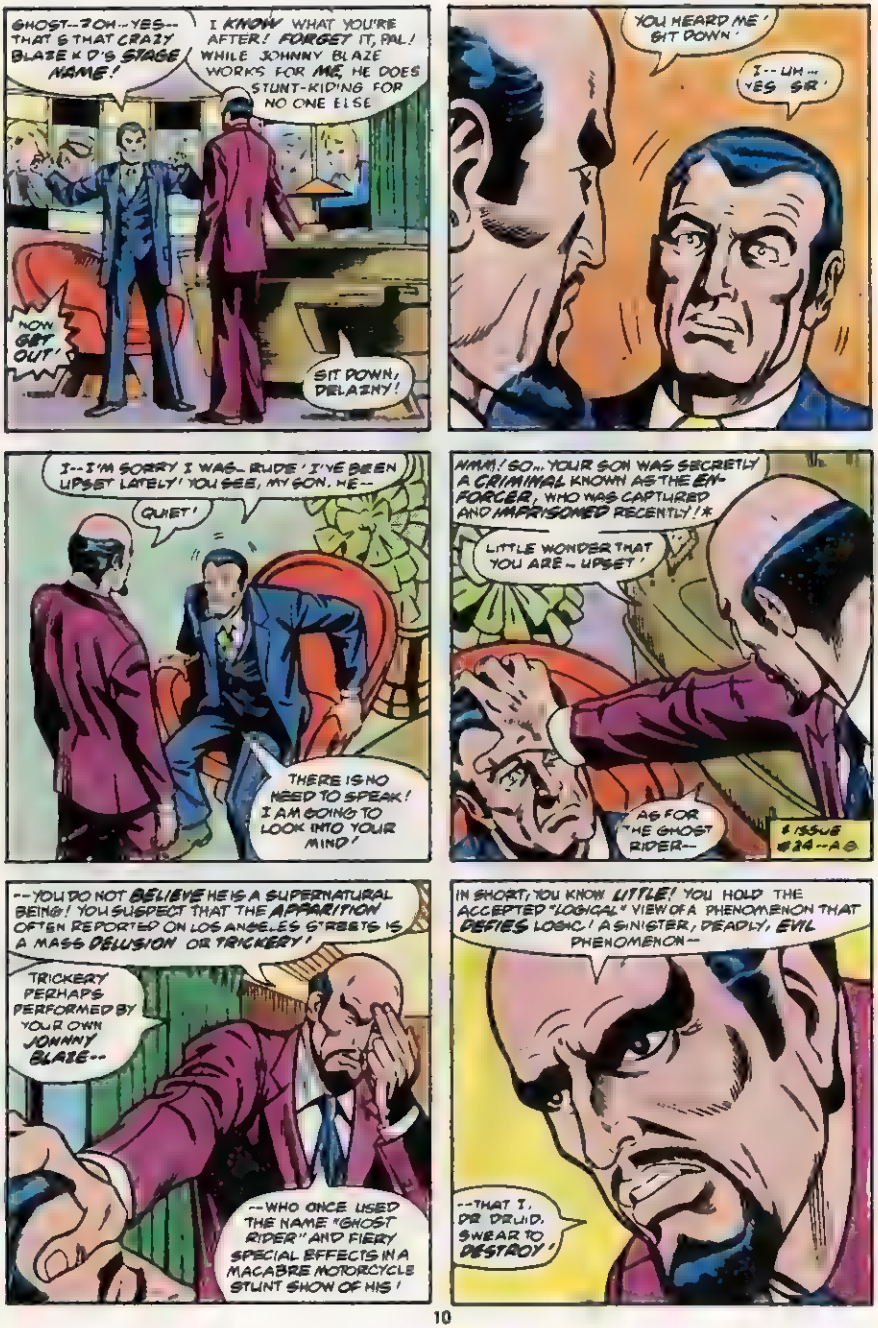
GHOST--? OH--YES--THAT'S THAT CRAZY BLAZE K'D'S STAGE NAME!
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFTER! FORGET IT, PAL! WHILE JOHNNY BLAZE WORKS FOR ME, HE DOES STUNT-KID'NG FOR NO ONE ELSE
NOW GET OUT!
SIT DOWN, DELAINY!
YOU HEARD ME! SIT DOWN!
I--UH--YES SIR!
I--I'M SORRY I WAS--RUDE! I'VE BEEN UPSET LATELY! YOU SEE, MY SON, HE--
QUIET!
THERE IS NO NEED TO SPEAK! I AM GOING TO LOOK INTO YOUR MIND!
HMM! SO--YOUR SON WAS SECRETLY A CRIMINAL KNOWN AS THE EN-FORCER, WHO WAS CAPTURED AND IMPRISONED RECENTLY!*
LITTLE WONDER THAT YOU ARE--UPSET!
AS FOR THE GHOST RIDER--
ISSUE #34--A
--YOU DO NOT BELIEVE HE IS A SUPERNATURAL BEING?! YOU SUSPECT THAT THE APPARITION OFTEN REPORTED ON LOS ANGELES STREETS IS A MASS DELUSION OR TRICKERY!
TRICKERY PERHAPS PERFORMED BY YOUR OWN JOHNNY BLAZE--
--WHO ONCE USED THE NAME "GHOST RIDER" AND FIERY SPECIAL EFFECTS IN A MACABRE MOTORCYCLE STUNT SHOW OF HIS!
IN SHORT, YOU KNOW LITTLE! YOU HOLD THE ACCEPTED "LOGICAL" VIEW OF A PHENOMENON THAT DEFIES LOGIC! A SINISTER, DEADLY, EVIL PHENOMENON--
--THAT I, DR DRUID, SWEAR TO DESTROY!

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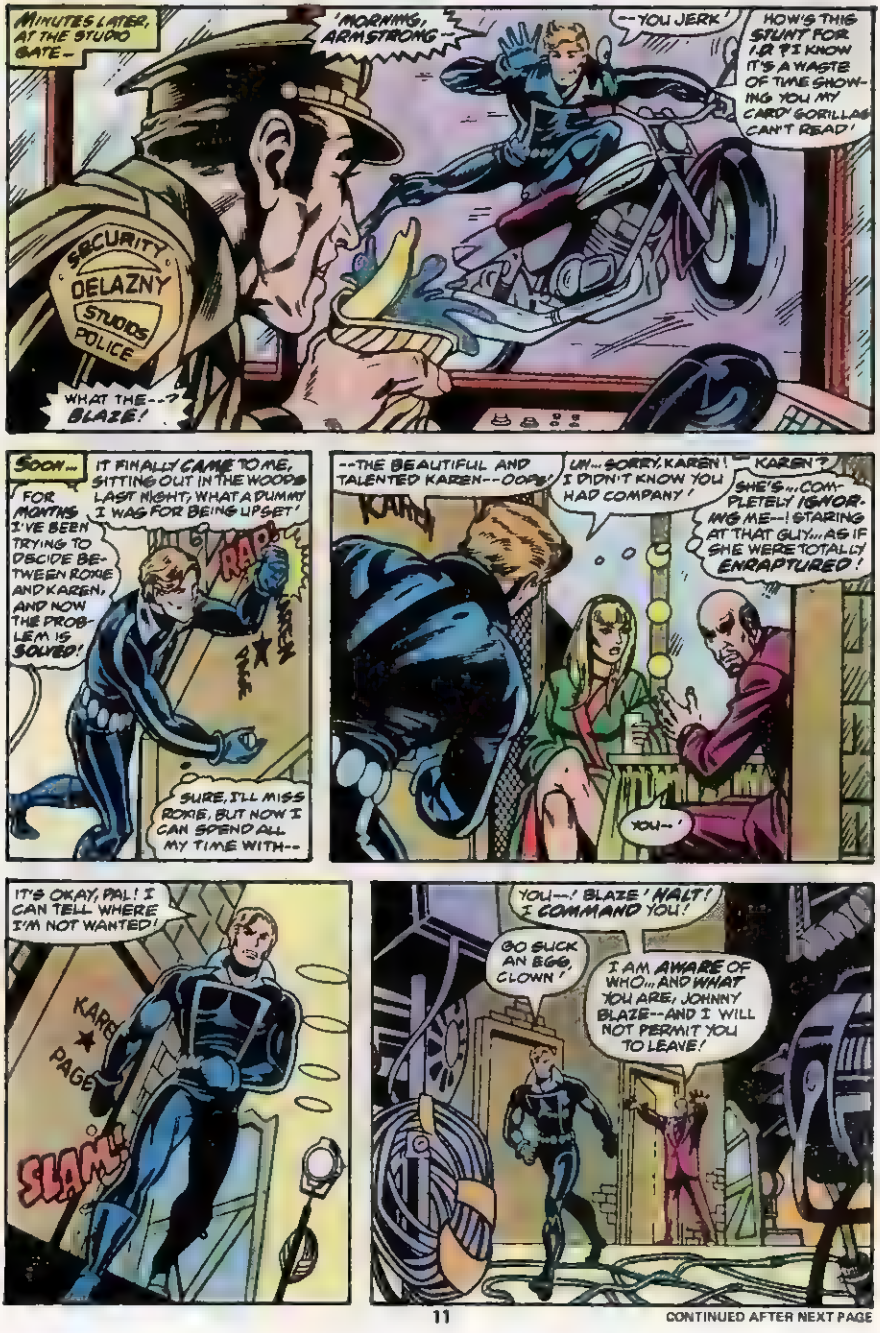
MINUTES LATER, AT THE STUDIO GATE--
'MORNING, ARMSTRONG--
--YOU JERK'
HOW'S THIS STUNT FOR I.Q.? I KNOW IT'S A WASTE OF TIME SHOWING YOU MY CARD/ GORILLAS CAN'T READ!
SECURITY
DELAZNY
STUDIOS
POLICE
WHAT THE--?
BLAZE!
SOON...
FOR MONTHS I'VE BEEN TRYING TO DECIDE BETWEEN ROXIE AND KAREN, AND NOW THE PROBLEM IS SOLVED!
IT FINALLY CAME TO ME, SITTING OUT IN THE WOODS LAST NIGHT; WHAT A DUMMY I WAS FOR BEING UPSET!
RAP!
SURE, I'LL MISS ROXIE, BUT NOW I CAN SPEND ALL MY TIME WITH--
--THE BEAUTIFUL AND TALENTED KAREN--OOPS!
KAREN
UH... SORRY, KAREN! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD COMPANY!
KAREN?
SHE'S... COMPLETELY IGNORING ME--! STARING AT THAT GUY... AS IF SHE WERE TOTALLY ENRAPTURED!
YOU--'
IT'S OKAY, PAL! I CAN TELL WHERE I'M NOT WANTED!
KAREN PAGE
SLAM!
'YOU--! BLAZE! HALT! I COMMAND YOU!
GO SUCK AN EGG, CLOWN!
I AM AWARE OF WHO... AND WHAT YOU ARE, JOHNNY BLAZE--AND I WILL NOT PERMIT YOU TO LEAVE!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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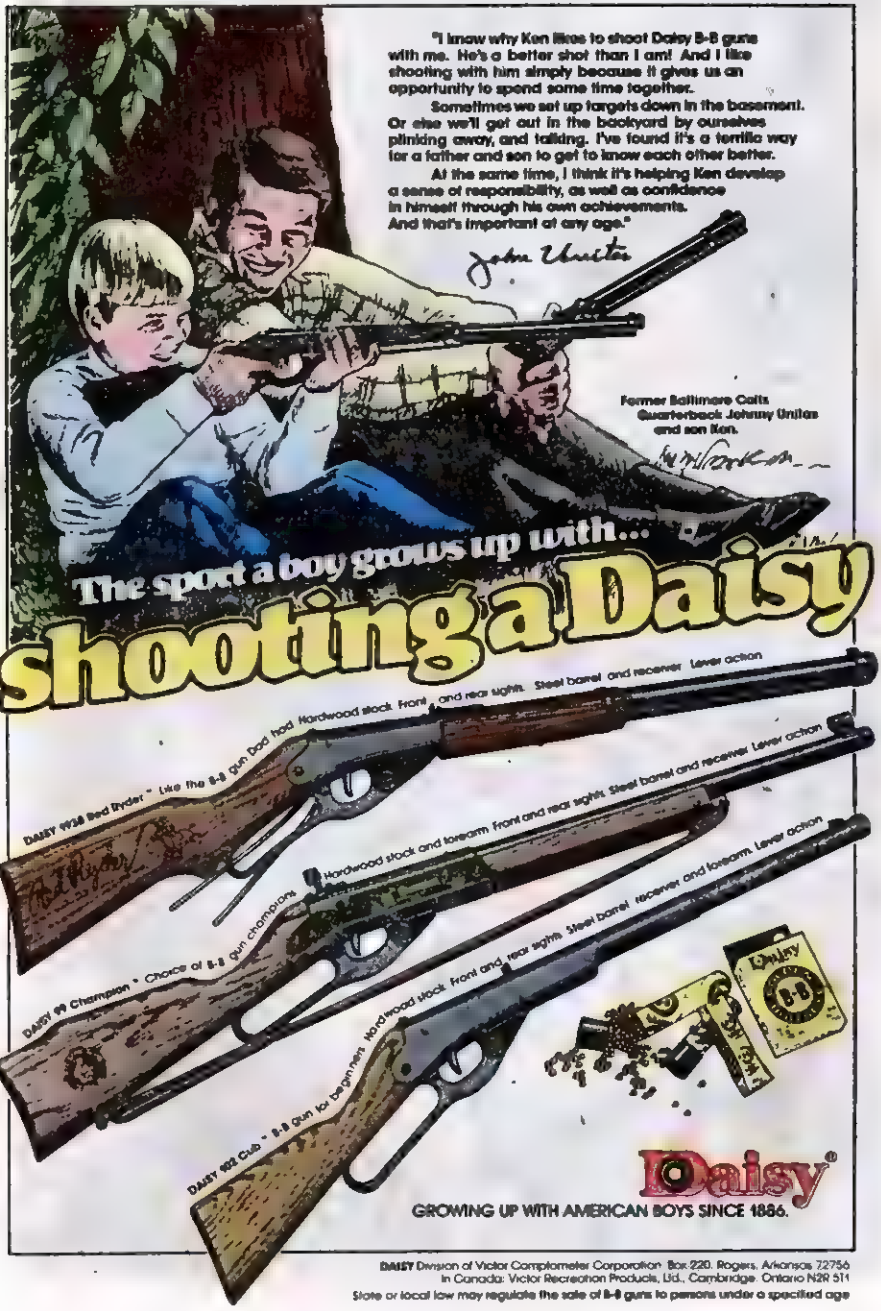
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I GO WHEN AND WHERE I--
WHA--?!
YOUR MORTAL GUISE CANNOT CONCEAL YOUR TRUE DEMONIC NATURE FROM ME, HELLSPAWN!
I AM DR DRUID-- HEIR TO THE OCCULT POWERS OF THE ANCIENT BRITONS AND MASTER OF THE UNKNOWN!
I CAN SENSE THE EVIL WITHIN! YOU ARE A CREATURE OF SATAN THAT MUST BE DRIVEN FROM THIS WORLD!
NOW WHAT?
THAT GUY MUST BE ONE O' THEM HINDU SNAKE CHARMERS OR SOMETHIN'! LOOKIT THAT!
OH--, ROGER, WHY IS HE DOING THAT? WHAT DOES HE WANT FROM JOHNNY?
I--I DON'T KNOW, ROXIE!
THAT MAN I WAS TALKING TO-- I THINK HE STARTED TO HYPNOTIZE ME-- AND NOW HE'S ATTACKING JOHNNY!
THIS HAS TO BE A BAD DREAM: IT HAS TO!
NO, ROXIE! DON'T GO ANY CLOSER! IT'S NOT SAFE!
BUT HE'S HURTING JOHNNY!
I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM, ROGER. LET ME GO!
LOOK, MISTER, I NEVER SAW YOU BEFORE, I NEVER DID ANYTHING TO YOU--
--SO GET OFF MY CASE, OR I'LL--
YOU WILL REVEAL YOUR TRUE SELF, DEMON, AND LASH OUT AT ME?
EXCELLENT!
DR DRUID FEARS YOU NOT! SHED YOUR HUMAN DISGUISE, BARE YOUR EVIL ESSENCE! I DEFY YOUR POWER!

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ALL RIGHT, JACK! IF YOU WANT THE GHOST RIDER SO BAD--
--I'LL GIVE YOU THE GHOST RIDER--
--AND SOON YOU WILL REGRET CHALLENGING THE HELLSPAWNED MIGHT OF THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE!
I CANNOT BE FETTERED BY THESE FLIMSY CABLES!
SNAP!
RIP-T!
SNAP!
SPLAT!
FOR THIS AFFRONT--
--YOU WILL SUFFER!
LOST IN ANGER, THE GHOST RIDER DOES NOT HEAR THE ONLOOKERS GASP IN HORROR AS HELLFIRE ENVELOPES THE RESOLUTE FIGURE OF DOCTOR DRUID
THEN DRAMATICALLY, THE FLAMES ABATE AS DRUID STEPS FROM THEIR EMBRACE UNSCATHED! HIS CIVILIAN CLOTHING MYSTERIOUSLY TRANSFORMED INTO RITUAL ROBES
THE FIRE IS COLD TO THE TOUCH-- MEANT TO SCALD THE SOUL, NOT THE BODY-- AND I NEARLY OVERWHELMED MY WILL!
I TOOK MY TOTAL CONCENTRATION TO RESIST IT, DESPITE MY MYSTIC DRUID IMMUNITY TO FIRE!
I STILL DEFY YOU, EVIL ONE!
NO ONE HAS EVER WITHSTOOD THE TOUCH OF HELLFIRE BEFORE!
NO MATTER! I WILL CRUSH YOU WITH MY OWN HANDS!
MY GOD! I--I THINK IT'S TRUE, WHAT THAT DRUID GUY IS SAYING!
YEAH! IT MUST BE!

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LISTEN TO THAT EERIE VOICE-- AND LOOK AT HIM--LOOK CLOSE --HE REALLY IS A DEMON!
IT CAN'T BE AN ACT! I KNOW SPECIAL EFFECTS WHEN I SEE 'EM! HE'S FOR REAL!
BLAZE ALWAYS DID GIVE ME THE CREEPS!
HE'S BEEN LURKING AMONG US ALL THIS TIME!
OH, NO!
LOOK OUT! HE'S SHOOTING FIRE AGAIN!
GOOD LORD! IT'S... FORMING A FLAMING MOTORCYCLE!
WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN!
WHAT ON EARTH--?
I PLAYED RIGHT INTO DRUID'S HANDS!
EXIT
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE CHANGED TO GR..N IN FRONT OF THAT CROWD!
MY RAGE ONLY SERVED TO TURN EVERYONE AGAINST ME AND "ARROVE" DRUID RIGHT!
CRASH!
GOT TO GET AWAY--FIGURE THINGS OUT!
I SENSED HIS AURA OF EVIL THE FIRST TIME I GLIMPSED HIM ON THE HIGHWAY--
--AND NOW I AM CERTAIN THAT HE IS A TOOL OF SATAN!
HE'S GOING AFTER BLAZE
HE--HE DOESN'T UNDERSTAND--! BUT IF HE PUSHES ANYONE TOO FAR--! OH, ROGER, I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM FIRST!
I'LL GO WITH YOU, ROGER! WE'LL TAKE MY CAR!

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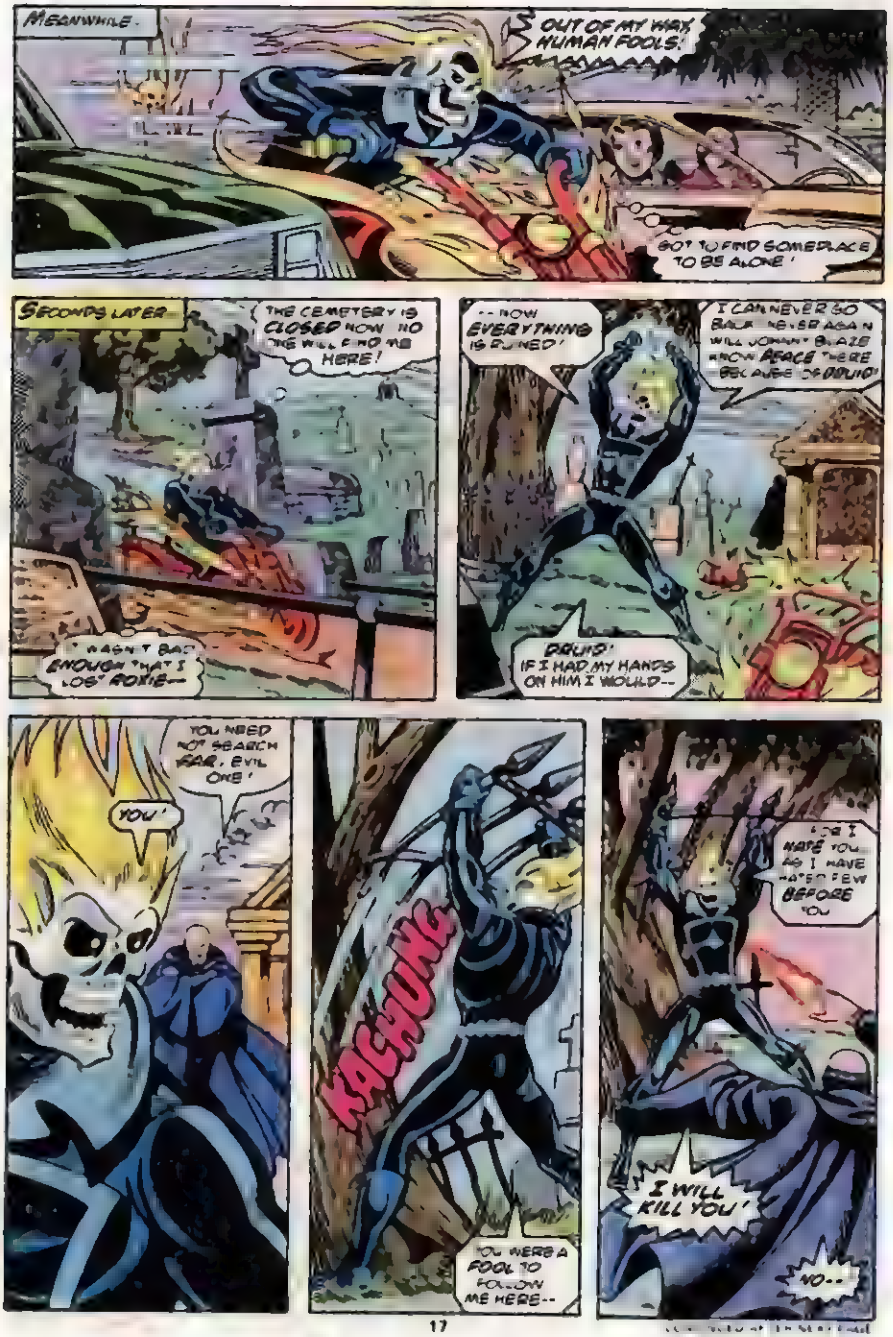
MEANWHILE...
OUT OF MY WAY, HUMAN FOOLS!
GOT TO FIND SOMEPLACE TO BE ALONE!
SECONDS LATER...
THE CEMETERY IS CLOSED NOW! NO ONE WILL FIND US HERE!
I WASN'T BAD ENOUGH THAT I LOST ROXIE--
-- NOW EVERYTHING IS RUINED!
I CAN NEVER GO BACK HOME AGAIN! WILL JOHNNY BLAZE KNOW PEACE THERE BECAUSE OF DRUID?
DRUID! IF I HAD MY HANDS ON HIM I WOULD--
YOU!
YOU NEED NOT SEARCH FAR, EVIL ONE!
KACHUNG
YOU WERE A FOOL TO FOLLOW ME HERE--
I HATE YOU AS I HAVE HATED FEW BEFORE YOU
I WILL KILL YOU!
NO--

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GHOST WRITERS!

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Dear Marvel,

The rate at which the quality of GHOST RIDER is increasing has been astounding. By no means am I saying that it was bad before, it's just that it has become a whole lot better! And GR #24 is no exception.

Jim Shooter is proving his suitability for the book very quickly. The dialogue in this issue is about the best that I've read in a while. It's enjoyable to see a self-proclaimed "invincible" super-villain cowering in fear once in a while.

Here's hoping that Ghost Rider's Silver Anniversary will be as good as Dracula's!

Ken Hart
540 Lincoln Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10306

Dear Jim,

I *loved* GR #24. Here we saw that fiery hellspawn at his horrific best. This time around he really used his hellborn strength, his skill as a stunt rider, and his powers to a truly effective end. And the reminder that only a skeleton, no flesh or blood, resides under the Ghost Rider's garb is enough to thoroughly shake up anyone.

I was, however, disappointed with the treatment of the Enforcer. That clumsy scheme he came up with to kill Blaze made me doubt his formidability.

And, as some last-minute remarks, I must pause to commend Don Heck's pencils, Dan Green's inks, Ken Klaczak's colors, Denise Wohl's letters, and (I haven't forgotten you, Archie) Archie Goodwin's editing! Everything was very well done.

So, I thank you, people. GHOST RIDER is one of my favorite Marvel mags. And give my regards to that guy with the funny head, won't you?

Meredith Robbins
230 Verando Avenue
Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

Will do, Mer!

Oh, one thing we probably should point out about the Enforcer—yeah, his death-trap might have been a bit inept as far as Ghost Rider is concerned. But you must remember that people in the Marvel scheme of things are still basically unaware of Blaze's actual hellspawn persona. . .until they actually *experience* his demonic side first hand.

Dear Jim,

In the very beginnings of GHOST RIDER, the biggest thing that stood out was the great artwork of Mike Ploog—who recently did such great work on the movie *WIZARDS*—and all of the mood he put into the character.

Now, of course, the direction of the strip has changed a bit. In this latest issue of the more super-heroic GR, you have introduced a great concept. On the third to last panel, Ghost Rider finally realizes that his greatest asset is the fear he instills in others.

I project that this realization could create an even greater image for Ghost Rider—that of avenging demon, striking terror into the hearts of his prey. GR could become a kind of supernatural vigilante. . .a real Shadow of the '70s.

Unfortunately, for this image the present art is not quite right. Ploog would be too much to hope for, but I will suggest the team of John Byrne and Val Mayerik.

I do hope you will follow through with the developments you presented in this issue. And say, why not bring back the Scarecrow?

Kirk Tingblad
516 South Green Avenue
New Richmond, WI 54017

The Scarecrow? Well, ya never know, Kirk. After all, Dr. Druid showed up this issue. . .who can say?

And as for the art, we refer you to our next prophetic missive.

Dear Archie,

How are the chances of seeing Don Perlin's pencils in this book? I think he could really pull off the proper mood for GHOST RIDER.

And please, keep Bone-dome in the CHAMPIONS.

Smokey Joe
720 Clarendon Street
Syracuse, NY 13210

Boy, Joe, this is really weird! We mean, your letter came into the office just a few days after Arch and Jim decided that Don Perlin was the ideal guy to take over the art chores on Ghosty's book. Looks like the old Marvel mind-meld is at work again, eh?

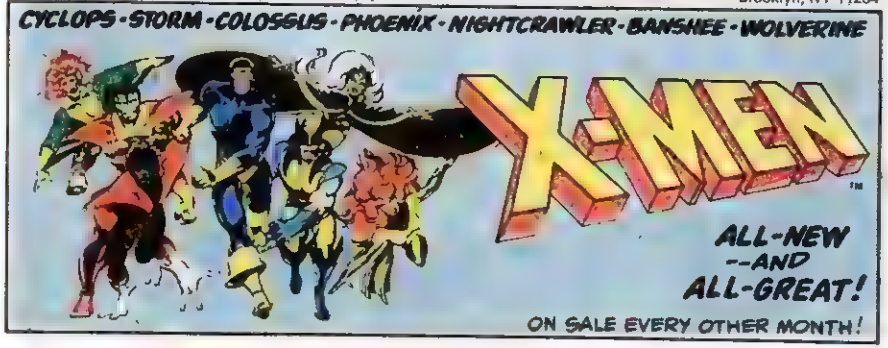
Oh, give our best to all the folks at the cafe, okay?

Dear Marvel People,

Shooter, you are unbelievable! In GHOST RIDER #24 you answered all my questions in relation to the Ghost Rider. The story itself was great from page one to page 31. I liked the way you handled Roxanne Simpson in the subplot. It's about time she started to see other men. Sure I feel sorry for Blaze. I really do! He can't be home all the time, because his powers are bound to draw him to trouble. Still, Roxy can't constantly wait up for him. But is she just trying to make Johnny jealous, or is she really trying to begin anew? Personally, I think she's just trying to make him jealous. . .so far.

All in all, Shooter, it was a very credible story. For example, on page 16, the Enforcer totally lost his cool when he encountered Ghost Rider—the guy he had supposed to be dead. That was good. Credibility is what readers go for, and Jim, you certainly are satisfying those cravings.

Mike Nelson
2421 East 71st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11234



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MAIL TODAY!

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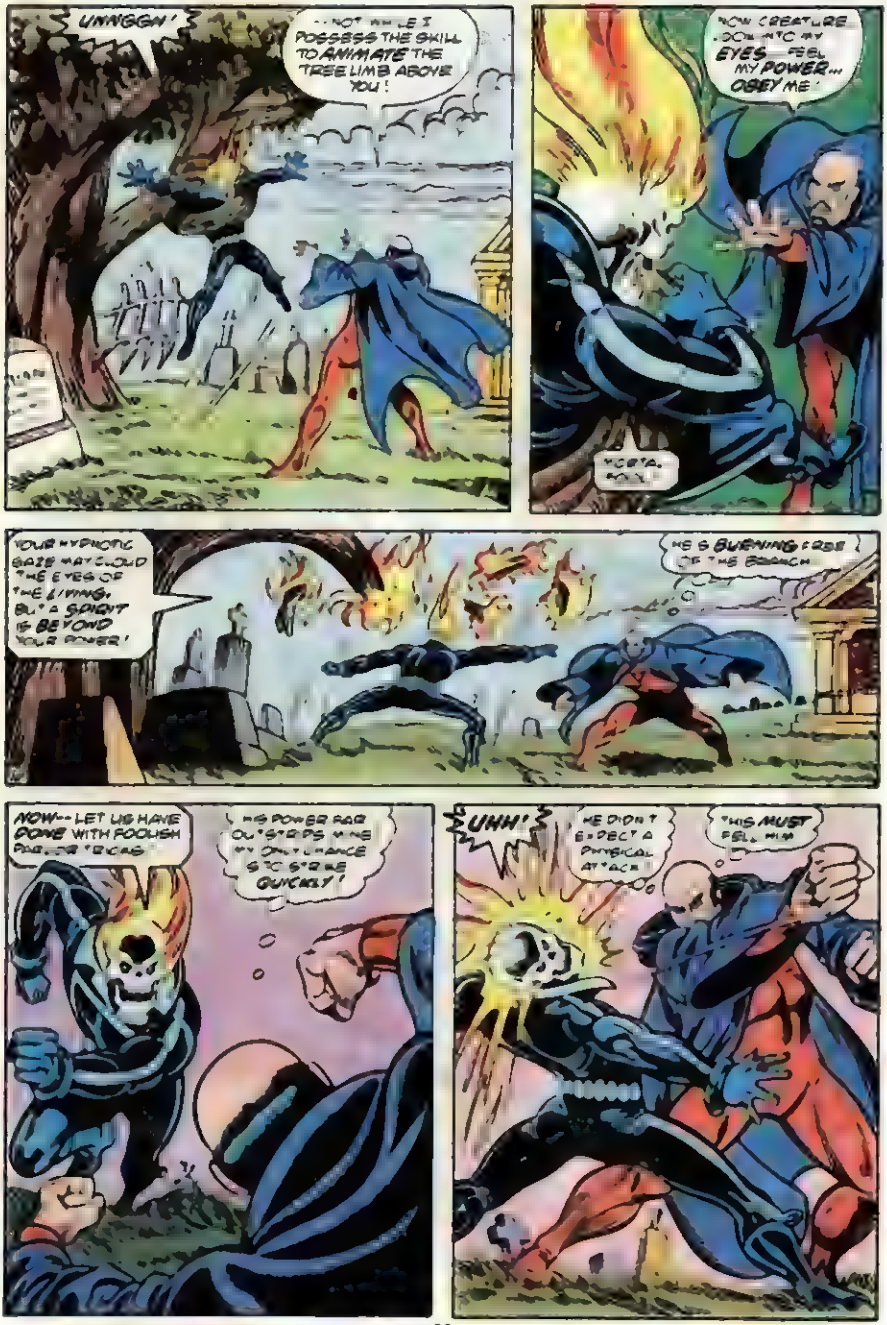
UNNGGH!
...NOT WHILE I POSSESS THE SKILL TO ANIMATE THE TREE LIMB ABOVE YOU!
NOW CREATURE LOOK INTO MY EYES—FEEL MY POWER... OBEY ME!
YOUR HYPNOTIC GAZE MAY CLOUD THE EYES OF THE LIVING, BUT A SPIRIT IS BEYOND YOUR POWER!
HE'S BURNING FREE OF THE BRANCH
NOW--LET US HAVE DONE WITH FOOLISH PHYSICAL TRICKS
HIS POWER HAS OUTSTRIPS MINE MY ONLY CHANCE IS TO STRIKE QUICKLY!
UHH!
HE DIDN'T EXPECT A PHYSICAL ATTACK
THIS MUST FELL HIM

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NO! HE'S STILL--OHH!
YOU ARE STRONG... FOR A MORTAL!
WHAM!
YOU NAME ME A DEMON, DRUID! DO YOU THINK I DO NOT KNOW WHAT I AM?
KRAK!
DO YOU THINK I CANNOT FEEL THE FLESH MELTING FROM MY BONES AS MY HUMANITY FADES?
AND, THOUGH I WAS SLOW TO PERCEIVE IT--
--I HAVE LEARNED... I AM FINALLY AWARE THAT AS I BECOME THIS SPECTRE, COMPASSION DRAINS OUT OF ME. I BECOME MERCILESS... AND I GROW FAR TOO EASY TO HATE!
IT SCARES ME, DRUID! SOMETIMES I BELIEVE I AM TRULY EVIL! PERHAPS YOU ARE RIGHT ABOUT ME--
--AND THAT IS WHY I HATE YOU MOST!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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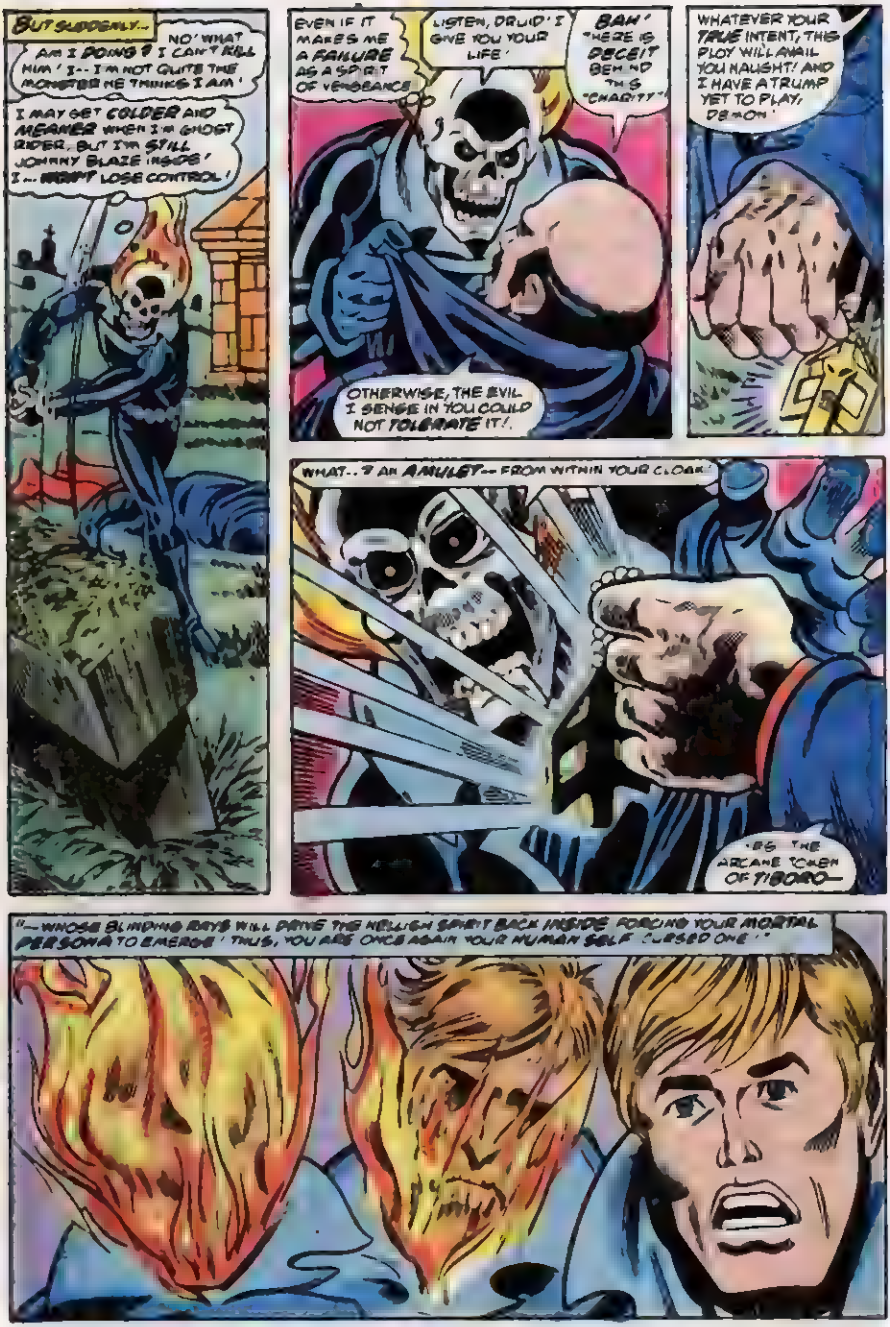
BUT SUDDENLY...
NO! WHAT AM I DOING? I CAN'T KILL HIM! I-- I'M NOT QUITE THE MONSTER HE THINKS I AM!
I MAY GET COLDER AND MEANER WHEN I'M GHOST RIDER, BUT I'M STILL JOHNNY BLAZE INSIDE! I-- WON'T LOSE CONTROL!
EVEN IF IT MAKES ME A FAILURE AS A SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE
LISTEN, DRUID! I GIVE YOU YOUR LIFE!
BAH! THERE IS DECEIT BEHIND THIS "CHARITY"!
OTHERWISE, THE EVIL I SENSE IN YOU COULD NOT TOLERATE IT!
WHATEVER YOUR TRUE INTENT, THIS PLOY WILL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT! AND I HAVE A TRUMP YET TO PLAY, DEMON!
WHAT..? AN AMULET-- FROM WITHIN YOUR CLOAK!
BY THE ARCANE TOKEN OF TIBORO--
"--WHOSE BLINDING RAYS WILL DRIVE THE HELLISH SPIRIT BACK INSIDE FORCING YOUR MORTAL PERSONA TO EMERGE! THUS, YOU ARE ONCE AGAIN YOUR HUMAN SELF, CURSED ONE!"

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I--I AM! I'M JOHNNY BLAZE, NOW! THAT BADDEST FORCED THE CHANGE AGAINST MY WILL!
AND NOW-- I HOLD THE ADVANTAGE!
GAHH!
C-CAN'T SLUG IT OUT WITH HIM! THIS MAH-MOUNTAIN COULD PLAY TACKLE FOR THE RAMS!
WOK!
GOT TO GET AWAY, BUY SOME TIME TO CHANGE BACK TO--
OHH'
WHAK!
SO'S FINISHED'
I AM FORTUNATE-- NEVER HAVE I FACED A DEADLIER FOE
--LEARN HOW BEST TO DEAL WITH HIM BEFORE HE RECOVERS!
THOUGH I AM NEARLY EXHAUSTED, I MUST PROBE HIS MIND-- LEARN HIS SECRETS--
I HAVE ESTABLISHED CONTACT! HIS THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES ARE LAID BARE TO MY SCRUTINY--
OH-- NO'
NO! THIS-- THIS CANNOT BE'

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

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MARVEL BULLPEN BULLETINS

ARCHIE GOODWIN Editor • JIM SHOOTER Associate Editor • ROGER SLIFER ROGER STERN ED HANNIGAN RALPH MACCHIO Assistant Editors • ROY THOMAS, LEN WEIN, MARV WOLFMAN STEVE GERBER JACK KIRBY Consulting Editors • JOHN ROMITA, MARIE SEVERIN, Art Directors • JOHN VERPOORTEN Production Manager • IRVING FORBUSH Staff Psychotic

STAN LEE'S SOAPBOX

This is it gang! It's the month that the long-awaited KISS Magazine goes on sale! For the ridiculous price of $1.50 you get a 64-page, glossy paper, magazine-sized masterpiece, featuring a simply incredible 40-page, full-color, super-hero comic strip starring KISS! Yes, KISS—the most unlikely, unusual, unexpected team of super-heroes since Doc Ock tried to elope with Aunt May! Can you picture KISS fighting Doctor Doom? Well, I believe it! Also you'll find characterization photos and frankly fabulous features—plus, an actual, on-the-spot, illustrated account of KISS giving their own blood for this once-in-a-lifetime issue! And that's all I'm gonna say about it now, 'cause you know how I hate to be a buckstert! And, speaking of Hanna-Barbera (which we weren't!), here's super-sensational announcement #2! For those of you who still turn on to THE FLINTSTONES, SCOOBY-DOO, YOGI BEAR, DYNAMUTT, and all the rest of their merry menage, mighty Marvel will leave you in a cultural wasteland no longer. We've just teamed up with the talented titans at H-B to bring you Scooby and the Flintstones this month, with Yogi and the Dynamutt, doggie comin' atcha next month! We figure if your batty Bullpen is gonna take over the comic book world, we might as well go all the way! Anyhow we've got some big, secret projects with Hanna-Barbera in the months to come, so you might as well climb aboard now, while there's still room! Wow! From Spidey to Scooby-Doo! Who says Marvel isn't where it's all happening! And now, one last reminder from yours truly (who's beginning to feel like a carnival pitchman!)—better start savin' your shekels, sagacious one, 'cause volume #4 of the omnipresent Origins Series goes on sale this fall, and it'll probably be the biggest blockbuster of 'em all! It's called THE SUPERHEROWOMEN, and—if you play your cards right and don't kick a down-hearted duck I'll tell you a bit about the contents in the next Soapbox or two. So, until we meet again, be good to each other and whatever you go, whatever you do, fight brain-strain—keep thinking Marvel!

Excelsior!

Stan

ITEM! July may be the traditional time for firecrackers, but there's another kind of explosion about to hit full force this month. And if your built-in combatism detector is starting to blip like crazy, that's because you're *right*. ...we *are* about to mention that Marvel Explosion we're always talking about here and in our ads. But, truth to tell, explosion is about the only way to describe all the zillion and one things we're sending your way this mid-summer season, over and above the items Stan has already covered in the Soapbox. Just for starters, let us clue you to the fact that the MARVEL SUPER-HEROES FUN BOOK #2 should already be on the shelves of your friendly neighborhood book emporium just waiting for you puzzle, maze, and word-game fans (and if you're *not*, these fun books could well *change* that) to stretch your skills as well as your knowledge of Marvel lore by trying them out.

ITEM! Then there's the big doings in our black-and-white magazine department, namely all kinds of excitement over the latest issue of MARVEL PREVIEW. This one will reintroduce you to STAR-LORD, the cosmic crusader who first appeared in the pages of PREVIEW #4. Ever since his dazzling debut, we've been hounded with requests to let Star-Lord soar the spaceways once again. So, editor JOHN WARNER recruited the popular writer/artist team of CLAREMONT and BYRNE (Chris and John to most MARVEL TEAM-UP and IRON FIST fans) to do just that. What we expected was the normally sensational job we expect on *any* of our books; what we got—aided, abetted, and amplified by the dramatically detailed inking of Terrific TERRY AUSTIN—was fifty-two pages of mind-stunning science-fiction adventure that had even the most jaded of Bullpenners living up to glimpses each new batch of completed pages as they were delivered. Okay, if you praise a thing *too* much, it creates expectations that can never be lived up to. So, in our typical low-key manner, we'll merely suggest that if you only buy *one* large-size format comic this year, better make it MARVEL PREVIEW featuring STAR LORD, or you'll be kicking yourself the rest of your life! There. Who says we can't be subtle?

ITEM! Talking about the black-and-white magazines, let's extend congratulations to ROGER SLIFER on becoming the new editor of the line, replacing JOHN WARNER, who'll be returning to freelance writing (such as the BLOODSTONE feature now backing up THE RAMPAGING HULK). Roger is bright-eyed and eager, and has a whole drawerful of projects he'll soon be bringing your way. In fact, in view of some of the future projects Roger will be in charge of, as well as some of the items he's handling currently—like the full-color MARVEL CLASSICS and special movie projects such as ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU and THE DEEP—black-and-white editor is pretty much a misnomer. At the moment, we don't really have a better or more accurate title (Special Format Editor comes close but somehow lacks the subtle *joie de vivre* we're always seeking), but as soon as we do, we'll hit you with it. Meantime, get ready to be hit with a lot of way-out wonderment from Mr. Slifer, his assistant editor Reliable RALPH MACCHIO and the whole blamed black-and-whi -er—well—their whole creative crew!

ITEM! If science-fiction is in the works this month in our black-and-white try-out mag, MARVEL PREVIEW, our *color* experimental book, MARVEL PREMIERE, is covering the other side of the coin, namely fantasy. We're presenting WEIRDWORLD, an excursion into the realm of wizards, elves, and mystic monsters conducted by Devil May Care DOUG MOENCH, Maniacal MIKE PLOOG, and Active ALEX NINO. If you've thrilled to Tolkien's THE HOBBIT or LORD OF THE RINGS we've got a hunch this is going to be just what you've been waiting for. In fact, with enough sales and letter encouragement, we just might be able to convince the powers-that-be that *now* is the time for a regular epic fantasy comic!

ITEM! Summer is approaching its peak, and so too is our production of King-size Annuals. This time around we've got TARZAN, THOR, THE ETERNALS, and JOHN CARTER, WAR LORD OF MARS making their appearances in all-new, bonus-size adventures, as well as THE INVADERS and AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. If that's not enough, two MARVEL CLASSICS are also ready for your edification and enjoyment: H G. Wells' THE INVISIBLE MAN and Homer's ILIAD. And coming up in August will be Annuals of THE AVENGERS, THE INCREDIBLE HULK, and THE FANTASTIC FOUR, plus the aforementioned Marvel Movie Special, THE DEEP (But more details about that *next* month). Meantime, remember—never tickle a temperamental toad!

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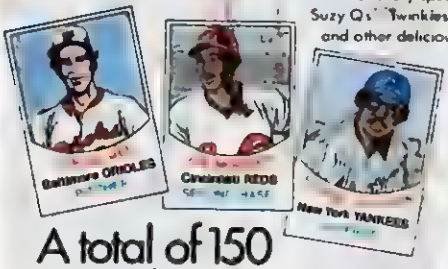

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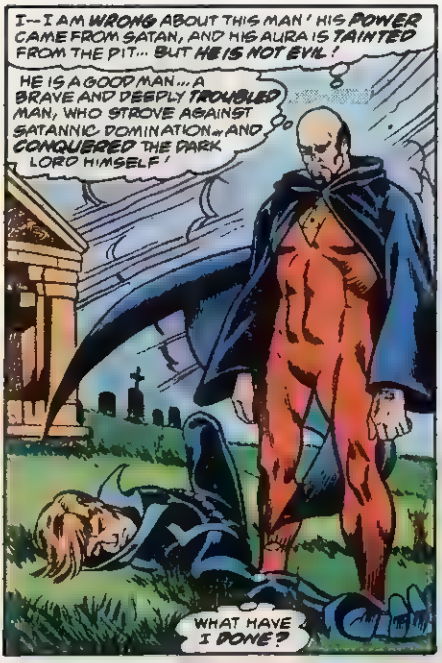
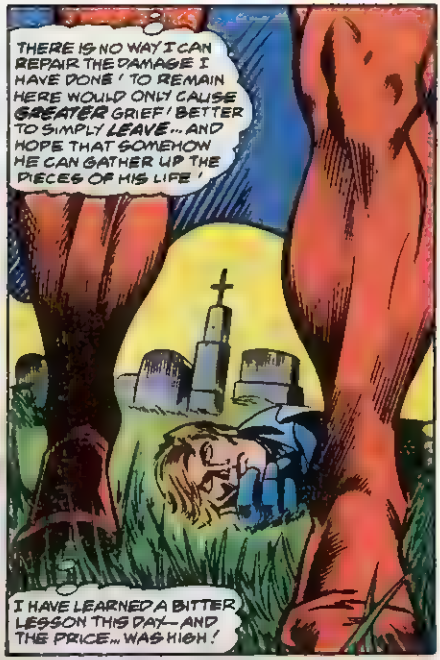
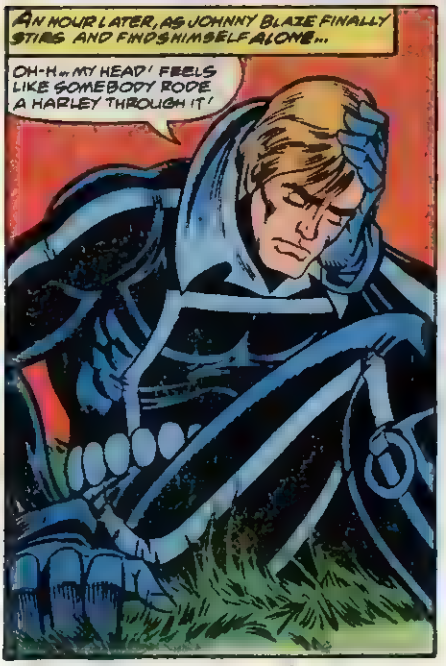
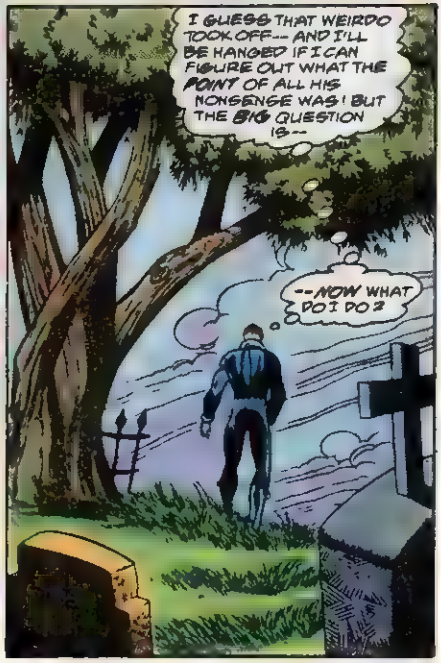

I--I AM WRONG ABOUT THIS MAN! HIS POWER CAME FROM SATAN, AND HIS AURA IS TAINTED FROM THE PIT... BUT HE IS NOT EVIL!
HE IS A GOOD MAN... A BRAVE AND DEEPLY TROUBLED MAN, WHO STROVE AGAINST SATANNIC DOMINATION... AND CONQUERED THE DARK LORD HIMSELF!
WHAT HAVE I DONE?


THERE IS NO WAY I CAN REPAIR THE DAMAGE I HAVE DONE! TO REMAIN HERE WOULD ONLY CAUSE GREATER GRIEF! BETTER TO SIMPLY LEAVE... AND HOPE THAT SOMEHOW HE CAN GATHER UP THE PIECES OF HIS LIFE!
I HAVE LEARNED A BITTER LESSON THIS DAY--AND THE PRICE... WAS HIGH!


AN HOUR LATER, AS JOHNNY BLAZE FINALLY STIRS AND FINDS HIMSELF ALONE...
OH-H... MY HEAD! FEELS LIKE SOMEBODY RODE A HARLEY THROUGH IT!


I GUESS THAT WEIRDO TOOK OFF--AND I'LL BE HANGED IF I CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT THE POINT OF ALL HIS NONSENSE WAS! BUT THE BIG QUESTION IS--
--NOW WHAT DO I DO?

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SEVERAL HOURS LATER, AT JOHNNY BLAZE'S APARTMENT...
13
14
WE'VE ALREADY CHECKED HERE TWICE, ROXIE!
I KNOW, ROGER, BUT--
LOOK! THE DOOR IS AJAR!
MAYBE HE'S HERE! OH, I HOPE!
NO! NOBODY HERE, ROX--OH-OH!
13
WHAT'S WRONG?
WELL... IT LOOKS LIKE JOHNNY'S BEEN HERE, ALL RIGHT--
--JUST LONG ENOUGH TO PACK UP!
JOHNNY'S... GONE? HE--HE LEFT--?
--WITHOUT... EVEN... TELLING ME?
ROGER CROSS TRIES VERY HARD NOT TO SMILE. ROXANNE SIMPSON BEGINS TO CRY--
--AND AT THAT INSTANT, MILES AWAY, A MAN RIDING EAST INTO THE GATHERING DARKNESS CONSIDERS TURNING BACK... ONLY FOR AN MOMENT.
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EXPR

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